

May – Skin Cancer Awareness Month

FACTS*

- Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers, accounting for nearly half of all cancer cases.
- Nearly all skin cancer is preventable.
- When diagnosed early, skin cancer is highly curable.
- More than one million cases of non-melanoma skin cancers are diagnosed in the United States each year.
- The most serious form of skin cancer is melanoma.
- The American Cancer Society estimates that 1,890 cases of melanoma will be diagnosed in Michigan during 2006.

*American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts and Figures, 2006

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT SKIN CANCER

- Avoid the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Seek shade. Look for shade, especially in the middle of the day when the sun's rays are strongest. Practice the shadow rule and teach it to your children. If your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are at their strongest.
- Slip on a shirt. Cover up with protective clothing to guard as much skin as possible when you are out in the sun. Choose comfortable clothes made of tightly woven fabrics that you cannot see through when held up to the light.
- Slop on sunscreen. Use sunscreen with a SPF of 15 or higher. Apply a generous amount (about a palmful) at least 30 minutes before going outdoors and reapply after swimming, toweling dry, or perspiring. Use sunscreen even on hazy or overcast days.
- Slap on a hat. Cover your head with a wide-brimmed hat, shading your face, ears, and neck. If you choose a baseball cap, remember to protect your ears and neck with sunscreen.
- Wear sunglasses with 99-100 percent UVA/UVB absorption to provide
- Follow these practices to protect your skin even on cloudy or overcast days. UV rays travel through clouds.

RISK FACTORS

There are several factors that increase one's risk of developing skin cancer. These include:

- Unprotected and/or excessive exposure to UV radiation
- Fair complexion
- Family history
- Multiple or atypical moles
- Severe sunburns as a child

RESOURCES

American Academy of Dermatology
www.aad.org

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov

National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention
www.skincancerprevention.org

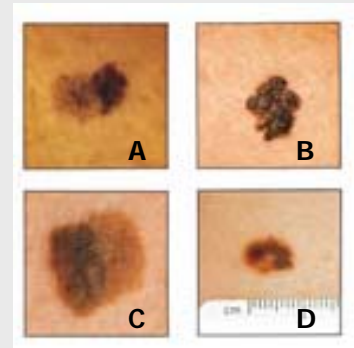
Skin Cancer Foundation
www.skincancer.org

The month of May is dedicated to increasing public awareness of the importance of skin cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment.

The ABCD Rule for the Early Detection of Melanoma

Almost everyone has moles. The vast majority of moles are perfectly harmless. A change in a mole's appearance is a sign that you should see your doctor. Here's the simple ABCD rule to help you remember the important signs of melanoma and other skin cancers:

- **A** is for **ASYMMETRY**: One-half of a mole or birthmark does not match the other.
- **B** is for **BORDER**: The edges are irregular, ragged, notched, or blurred.
- **C** is for **COLOR**: The color is not the same all over, but may have differing shades of brown or black, sometimes with patches of red, white or blue.
- **D** is for **DIAMETER**: The area is larger than 6 millimeters (about ¼ inch – the size of pencil eraser) or is growing larger.



Other important signs of melanoma include changes in size, shape, or color of a mole or the appearance of a new spot. Some melanomas do not fit the ABCD rule described above so it is particularly important for you to be aware of changes in skin lesions or a new lesion.

HOW TO EXAMINE YOUR SKIN

- Get familiar with your skin and your own pattern of moles, freckles, blemishes, and birthmarks.
- Check your skin monthly and be alert to changes in the number, size, shape, or color of spots on your skin or sores that do not heal.

The best time to do this simple exam is after a bath or shower. Use a full-length and a hand mirror so you can check your skin from head to toe, noting anything new.

OTHER SKIN CANCER WARNING SIGNS

- A sore that does not heal
- A new growth
- Spread of pigment from the border of a spot to a surrounding area
- Redness or a new swelling beyond the border
- Change in sensation – itchiness, tenderness, or pain
- Change in the surface of a mole – scaliness, oozing, bleeding, or the appearance of a bump or nodule

Even one severe sunburn during childhood can increase the risk for skin cancer later in life.